

THE SWORD OF THE LORD

EDITED BY JOHN R. RICE
Office 512 West Franklin Street, Wheaton, Illinois

"And they cried, The Sword of the Lord, and of Gideon." Judges 7:20

An Independent Religious Weekly, Standing for the Verbal Inspiration of the Bible, the Deity of Christ, His Blood Atonement, Salvation by Faith, New Testament Soul Winning and the Premillennial Return of Christ. Opposes Sin, Modernism, and Denominational Overlordship

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THE CHURCH OF TODAY

BY C. B. HEDSTROM

Chairman, Chicago and International Christian Business Men's Committees

That there has been a falling away from God's plan is acknowledged by God's true servants and wide-awake church leaders today. The "falling away" process has been gradual, a great deal like Lot's backsliding whose first step in the wrong direction was leaving the company of Abraham, the father of faith. Later, we remember, he pitched his tent near Sodom and finally we find him living in that wicked city.

In the second and third chapters of Revelation we have the complete picture of the backslidden church. Not a pretty picture, but it is the testimony of Jesus, the True and Faithful Witness. Let us look at these seven churches and then compare conditions of today.

The church of Ephesus had lost its first love. No mention is made of any terrible crime or sin. No, to the contrary, our Lord commends this church for its good works and patience "for my name's sake," but in a sad tone adds, "I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love." Remember that this church has had great interest, zeal, and plenty good works, but the love for Christ was not the same as in the beginning. It had grown cold. When your feelings are gone, and coldness takes the place of a burning heart, you are comforted with a cold ministry which satisfies you with the thought that "we live on faith, not feelings."

Why are some people more interested in concerts and programs than in revival meetings? The answer is easy: There has already been a falling away in the heart. When love has grown cold and a frigid atmosphere takes the place of a burning heart, the first thing we do is to remove the boundary lines between the world and God. The result: we mix with the world.

As long as God's people had a burning love for Christ, the worldly people had no desire to mix with them. They were a "peculiar people," but just as soon as they became "reasonable" and not too hot, the world began to join their company.

The second backsliding step we find in the Pergamos church, where the world has been let in and they have allowed the doctrine of the enemy to enter. In this state you are not satisfied with manna from heaven. Your desires and appetites are for the fleshpots of Egypt, with its garlic and onions. Revival meetings, Bible study, testimony, and praise services have lost their attraction. Now something must take the place of a Biblical program and the substitutions consist of rummage sales, oyster suppers, socials and "catchy" programs. And here we have the up-to-date picture of the modernistic church.

The backsliding continues and we find that in the Thyatira church the world rules (Rev. 2:20). In this state we are ready to appoint and be satisfied to have worldly church leaders. Now these

with oratorical gifts, money power and good standing "in the courts of the world" take the place of men with old-fashioned faith and spiritual power. Under this new order false teachers will be welcomed with open arms, for "the time has come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers having itching ears. And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned to fables" (II Tim. 4:3, 4). "Away with old-fashioned revivals; what we need today is 'Streamlined Revival'—what we need is a new thought evolution and not a spiritual revolution—no need to go to God with your burdens, tell it to some friend or confess it to some group. The blood of Christ is too vulgar in our day and age and belongs to a slaughter-house religion; you can ease your mind and guilty conscience by taking a stand for higher and loftier ideals."

The final step in this sad state of affairs we have in the Laodicean church, a picture of the apostate church. "I am rich, and increased in goods and have need of nothing," but the True and Faithful Witness says that you are "poor, blind, naked." The Laodicean spirit prevails all over our land today and it is a sad spectacle to see churches that were a great testimony for God and real soul-saving stations which today are spiritually bankrupt. "Why should we wake up? Nothing wrong with us," is the monotone from their altars. "We don't want pessimistic preachers with repentance messages."

When this condition has gripped the churches we find that beautiful orations take the place of blood and fire preaching, classic choir anthems are substituted for

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With the Editor

Mrs. Rice and baby Joy are with me at Petersburg, Illinois, in the tabernacle revival campaign, and we are having a lovely time. We are entertained in the farm home of Mr. and Mrs. George Ennis. Their kindness, their deep piety, their good cheer and hospitality, are a real blessing, following hotels and cafes.

Nearly everything we eat is raised right here on the farm. How good the English peas have been, out of the pods, cooked with cream from Ennis cows, the same day they are gathered from dewy vines! Now they are getting harder, but already the green beans are in, and they are flavored with a bit of home cured ham fat or bone. They have their own potatoes in the cellar, fresh lettuce wilted by the big bowlful graces the table often. At breakfast the country cured ham with eggs that are so fresh they stand up high—I had two of them poached with the ham gravy this morning! The bread is home baked, and we have had butter home churned. The cherry tree has a stepladder against it, and, my! the fresh cherry pie is better than any in the hotels! The strawberry preserves were saved for me, Mrs. Ennis says, but Mrs. Rice insists on eating them too!

They have wide lawns, landscaped flower gardens, with more shrubs and flowers than I ever heard the names of before. Mr. Ennis knows them all by name, flower, habit of growth, and lovingly tends them. He is past seventy, so most of the farm is rented out. These two work together in the garden, and in the house, read to each other in the long winter evenings. They have their own electric light plant, running water and all conveniences. They are dear souls. They insisted on Mrs. Rice coming; she and Mrs. Ennis cook and wash dishes and clean house

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THE GOD OF ALL COMFORT

BY DR. H. A. IRONSIDE

Pastor, Moody Memorial Church
Chicago, Illinois

Preached on Radio WJJD, Chicago,
June 12, 1940

The first chapter of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, verse three: "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort."

What a delightful title that is, "The God of all comfort." If there was ever a day that people needed comfort, I think it is in this day. And how foolish it is for men to turn away from the source of all comfort and try to find that which will give rest to their hearts and satisfaction to their minds in things that do not really profit.

Have you noticed how the entire Trinity, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, are all presented to us in this ministry of comfort? Here it is the Father that is specially in view. "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort." Then you remember the beautiful title that the Lord Jesus Himself gave to the Holy Spirit. He said, "I am going away, but I will not leave you comfortless. I will send the Comforter to you." And so the Holy Spirit is called the Comforter. The Lord spoke of the Holy Spirit as "another Comforter." Why use that word another? Because He Himself was the Comforter while He was here on earth, and He is our Comforter in Heaven. For in the second chapter of First John we read this: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins;

and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world." We have an advocate with the Father. That word advocate is exactly the same word that is used in the gospel of John and translated Comforter, the Paraclete, that is, one who comes to your help in an hour of need. And so God the Father is the Comforter. God the Holy Spirit is the Comforter, and God the Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, is our Comforter.

And when you think of this wonderful ministry of comfort, I suppose the first thing that naturally comes to your mind is the comfort of forgiveness. And how the Lord Jesus loves to speak words of comfort to the penitent soul! We remember that woman who came to Him so distressed, so troubled, a life of sin and evil behind her; her heart and conscience so polluted and unclean. But she wept out the story of her sinfulness at the feet of Jesus, and He said to her, "Be of good comfort, thy sins are forgiven thee." She went away that day knowing that for her the sin question was settled. Do you know that comfort, the comfort of divine forgiveness? I don't know anything more distressing than to go on from day to day with a conscience burdened with guilt, knowing that things are not right between God and yourself, and not knowing how to get it right. But, oh, thank God, when the soul is ready to act on the instruction of the Word of God, when one comes to Him confessing the sin, acknowledging the iniquity, then He speaks words of comfort, "Thy sins are forgiven thee!"

How did that poor woman of the seventh of Luke know she was forgiven that day? I have often pictured her as she left the Pharisee's house, starting down the street again, perhaps to her home, and meeting maybe some of the boon companions of her godless days. And possibly they opened their arms to her and said, "We are glad to see you. Come on, we are going into this thing or the other thing in order to seek worldly gratification."

And she would say, "Oh, no. I am through with that forever. Everything is different now. My sins are all forgiven, and I can't live the old life any more."

And somebody might say, "Your sins forgiven! How do you know your sins are forgiven?"

"I have been to Jesus' feet, and He told me so."

That is all she needed, "Thy sins are forgiven thee." Five words from the lips of the Son of God settled the question for her. And dear friend, when you will come thus confessing your sin, when you will come thus putting your trust in the Saviour, the same blessed words will speak comfort and peace to your heart: "Thy sins are forgiven thee."

But then there is not only the comfort of forgiveness, but there is the comfort of God's tender interest in us, in all the various vicissitudes of life. Every life has trials. Every life has sorrows. The Christian is no more exempt from trouble and tribulation and persecution and sickness and bereavement than other people. The

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JUDGE NOT!

"JUDGE NOT, AND YE SHALL NOT BE JUDGED: CONDEMN NOT, AND YE SHALL NOT BE CONDEMNED: FORGIVE, AND YE SHALL BE FORGIVEN." — Luke 6:37

EVANGELIST JOHN R. RICE

"My husband says he is a Christian, but he is not," said a lady the other day. "That man is not a Christian; he claims to be, but I know he is not by the way he lives," said a pastor.

How common that is! Yet what a wicked sin it is, clearly and repeatedly forbidden in the Bible. God plainly commands us not to judge others. We are not to judge whether one is saved or not, we are not to judge his motives, his sincerity, or anything else about his heart.

Not a single Christian on the earth is to pass judgment on the state of any person's heart or to judge whether others are saved. Yet, here is a wide-spread sin. The more fundamental in doctrine Christians are the more they are tempted to become like Pharisees, feeling themselves perfectly capable to pass judgment on others. Often the more separated Christians are from the world, the more like Pharisaical hypocrites they become, freely passing judgment on others who profess to be children of God, but who do not live clean lives separated from worldliness. In literally hundreds of cases, Christians have told me that one who attended a picture show was certainly not saved. I know the evils of the movies (see my

book, *What's Wrong With the Movies?*), but I know I have no right on that basis to judge whether one is a child of God, whether he has ever been born again.

Since my articles on "Lodges Examined By the Bible" (now in book form) were printed in *The Sword of the Lord*, I have had a heavy mail on that subject. A number of people have written saying that one who was a lodge member could not possibly be a child of God. In the manuscript of the book on lodges, I gave the example of my godly father, a minister who joined several lodges and the harm it did him, and said, "But my father was a saved man." The book came back from the publisher with the quotation, "I think my Father was a saved man," inferring a doubt.

This week, I have just answered a letter from a woman who insisted that if one fell into outbroken sin, he could not possibly have been born again.

In revivals, I am constantly shocked by pastors telling me how certain they feel that certain of their members are not saved. They refer to members who name a time and place when they definitely trusted Christ for salvation, but have grown backslidden and cold.

To all this, the Lord Jesus gives a clear and definite command: "Judge not!" It is a wicked sin,

a sin of pride, of self-righteousness, of arrogance. It grieves God and does unmeasured harm. I beg you, my readers, do not be guilty of this sin!

While Christians cannot judge people they may judge certain things, certain facts. It will clear our minds if we discuss, before going further, the things that a Christian may and should judge.

First, a Christian can judge false doctrine. In Matthew 7:15-20, is a passage often misinterpreted. It is in the same chapter where Jesus said, "Judge not, that ye be not judged" (Matt. 7:1). Read this passage carefully:

"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves."

"Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?"

"Even so, every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit."

"A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit."

"Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." (CONTINUED ON PAGE 2)

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JUDGE NOT!

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

"Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them."
—Matthew 7:15-20.

Careless people seeking an excuse for their sin, love to take verse twenty of the above passage as contradicting the command to judge not and therefore giving them a right to judge people by their fruits and thus determine whether they are saved. But that is not the meaning of the passage as any honest and prayerful student will see.

Here Jesus is talking about false prophets. The fruit of a false prophet is false teaching, unscriptural doctrine. Thus one may compare the preaching, teaching or writing of a religious leader with the Bible and determine whether or not his doctrine is true. One may read "Christian Science" literature, for example, and see that it denies the fact of sin, denies the blood atonement of Christ, denies the need for a new birth, denies the fallen nature of man. One can see that "Christian Science" makes Mary Baker Eddy about on an equal with Christ and counts her writings inspired like the Bible. Then any reader has a right to judge the doctrines of Mary Baker Eddy as false doctrine. By such doctrine, then, one knows that she was a false prophet. We cannot tell whether or not she was saved. It looks doubtful, but no one can know. Saved people have often fallen into false doctrine. We cannot tell whether she was sincerely and earnestly trying to do right. Her divorces, her taking material without giving credit to other teachers, her boldness in placing her own writings equal to the Bible, indicate a sinful attitude of heart, but we must leave it to God as to whether she was more wicked than others in her heart. We certainly know her teaching is false and that she was a false teacher, a false prophet: "Ye shall know them by their fruits."

Thus, every hearer has a right to weigh the teachings of pastor, evangelist, Bible teacher and author, and carefully, diligently, compare them with the Bible. That is what the noble hearers did in Berea when they heard the preaching of Paul and Silas. "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11).

Christians have a right to judge doctrine but not to judge the hearts of men.

Second, Christians have a right to judge concerning right and wrong. Instead of having Christians carry differences to law, to be tried in secular courts in any controversy of wages, wrongs, and damages, other Christians should be called in to arbitrate the matter prayerfully.

"Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?"

"Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?"

"Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?"

"If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church."

"I speak to your shame, Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren?"

—I Corinthians 6:1-5.

A child of God should have a right to help other Christians to come to an agreement about what

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would be right and just in their treatment of one another. But that is entirely different from judging persons, that is their hearts and motives. If one Christian brother's cow got into another man's corn, I might prayerfully judge how much damage was done to the corn and how much his neighbor, who left the gate open, should pay to make it right. But it would be foolish and wicked for me to judge on circumstantial evidence how much malice was in the heart of one neighbor against the other and that one man was unconverted because of the way he treated his neighbor.

In fact, the only way Christians would be useful as a mediator in such a case would be by maintaining the spiritual attitude commanded by the Saviour in Luke 6:36, 37, "Be ye therefore merciful, as your father also is merciful. Judge not, and ye shall not be judged; condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned; forgive, and ye shall be forgiven." Judging right and wrong in matters and things is not the same as judging people, their hearts and motives.

Third, Christians may even pass judgment on the lives of other Christians to the extent of publicly withdrawing fellowship from them in the church, excluding them from membership in the congregation. In First Corinthians, chapter five, Paul calls the attention of the church at Corinth to a member who was living in open sin, committing fornication with his step-mother. The sin was well known and was causing great reproach on the church. Paul insisted, "That he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed" (I Corinthians 5:2, 3).

He commanded them that when they were gathered together they should with his spirit and with the power of Christ purge out the leaven, that is publicly they should "deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (I Cor. 5:5). They were not to keep company with anyone who was called a brother but was known to be "a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner" (verse 11). They were not to eat with such a person or have fellowship with him and the chapter closes with this command, "Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person."

It is clear then that Christians have a right to judge concerning certain sins that should break Christian fellowship. Christians who commit such sins bring a great reproach on the church. Such people should first be visited to try to win them to the right way (Matt. 18:15-17). If such a wayward Christian is penitent he should be immediately forgiven. Paul said about such cases, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted" (Gal. 6:1).

But where there is a continual course of disgraceful sin, contaminating others, bringing shame on the cause of Christ, then Christians ought to withdraw from the fellowship of any such a church member. To ignore or endorse such flagrant and publicly known sin, unconfessed and unrepented, would grieve God and do great harm. Christians, then, have a right to judge about publicly known sin and to avoid fellowship and companionship with those who continue in such sin.

But what a wonderful lesson does the inspired apostle Paul give us in First Corinthians, chapter five, about judging one another! Because he knew the horrible nature of the sin of this man continuing in fornication with his step-mother and though he insisted that the man be turned out of the church at the next meeting, yet Paul never once said that man was not saved! Rather he urged that the man be publicly delivered to Satan "for the destruction of the flesh that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (I Cor. 5:5). Sin brings ruin to the body and even the child of God cannot avoid the fearful reaping of the wages of sin in his flesh. But Paul confidently trusted that

the spirit of even this wicked fornicator would be found saved in the day of the Lord Jesus! While Paul judged concerning the man's deed, he did not attempt to judge the man's heart or motives and did not say that the man was unsaved, nor did he encourage anyone else to say so.

And Paul's trust was vindicated. The people in Corinth turned out that brother and refused to associate with him because of his disgraceful life. When Paul wrote to them again, the brother had shown such penitence, such sorrow, such a change in life, that Paul urged them quickly to forgive him and receive him (II Cor. 2:5-11). He was evidently a truly saved man, all along.

A Christian then may judge doctrine, comparing it with the Bible. He may judge sin, prayerfully, without judging the sinner. But no Christian ever has a right to pass judgment as to whether someone else is saved or lost. And no Christian has a right to presume that he knows the motives and intentions of any heart.

If one declares that he has trusted in Christ as his Saviour and has assurance that his sins are forgiven by faith in the shed blood of Christ, then I ought charitably to take his testimony the best I can. If he does not live as a Christian ought, then I must consider my own frail attempts, my own failures, my own sins, not so well known to the public, perhaps, but intimately known to God.

If one does not claim to have trusted in Christ and to have accepted Him as Saviour, then we do right to take his testimony that he is unsaved. We know that if one claims to be saved by his own goodness, or saved by church membership, he is mistaken because we have the plain statements of the word of God that only those who trust in Christ are saved. We have the right to suppose that one who does not claim to have trusted Christ for salvation is lost, and, charitably, we can only hope that one who professes to know and love the Saviour and to have trusted Him wholly for salvation is really a child of God.

Doubtless, in many cases, our suppositions are not true. Some are saved who cannot give any clear testimony as to when and how it happened. Something very definite happens in the heart of one who is saved, but often not much happens in the head, not much of assurance, nor of clear testimony, until the word of God brings light to the mind. Babies are born a good while before they know much. And babies would never know who their fathers or mothers were or anything about their birth unless they were taught by others. So some are saved who have no clear testimony, and some are saved who do not act like they are saved. But others, we are sad to say, are not saved, though they may claim to be and many are unrighteous sinners who appear very moral and religious. We can only trust that those have trusted Christ and have been born again who say they have.

We are apt to be mistaken sometimes, being human after all. Seeing now only through a glass darkly, we cannot judge the heart. "Judge not that ye be not judged."

Bible Examples Prove That Many Are Saved Who Do Not Act Like It

If I had intimately known Lot, the rich man who moved his family down to Sodom and had fellowship with the wicked Sodomites, calling them brethren; if I had heard him offer to send his virgin daughters out into the night for the lewd pleasure of a bunch of sex perverts; if I had known the life of covetousness, of worldliness, and drink, so that his religion was the joke of his sons-in-law, I would have assumed, no doubt, that he was an unsaved hypocrite. He never won a soul. He kept the company of wicked men and strove to please them. He took his wine with him out to the cave whither he fled and then got drunk and ruined both his remaining daughters! Did anyone ever have more marks of a Christless, wicked man? Certainly I would have judged him to be unsaved. But, I would have certainly been mistaken. God calls him "just Lot," says, "he was vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked," and says that he was a righteous man who

vexed his righteous soul from day to day with the unlawful deeds of the Sodomites (II Peter 2:7, 8). Only God knew the heart of Lot, that he was really a just man, that he really was sincere and that he had changed heart, a "righteous soul." Reader, you dare not judge!

If one of our self-righteous critics had been in Jerusalem when King David loitered on his palace roof, saw Bathsheba at her bath, led her into adultery and then skilfully planned the death of her husband, Uriah, he would certainly have judged David to be an unregenerate sinner, a hypocrite who never knew salvation. That was simply one of the many cases where a child of God was overtaken in a grievous sin, a sin that brought great reproach on the name of God. And the casual observer would never know the real anguish of heart that the born-again David had about his sin. By divine revelation it is pictured in Psalm fifty-one. David was a saved man, a man with a new heart, a man who hated sin and loved God, a man after God's own heart. But like all other Christians, he still had the old nature, too, and the temptations that human flesh is heir to until our bodies are changed and glorified at Christ's coming. Anyone who judged David a lost sinner would be a presumptuous sinner passing judgment on the heart which only God can see.

Simon Peter did not act like a Christian when he sat down with the enemies of Christ and first denied, then cursed and swore that he did not know Jesus and that he was no friend of the Saviour. Surely, that sin was as bad as adultery or murder. It was the combined sin of bad company, lack of faith, lying, blasphemy and denying the Saviour in the greatest hour of His trial. Peter did not act like a Christian, but he was one. The presumptuous judge would have said that Peter was not saved, that he had no true love for the Saviour. I have no doubt that many did say that. There is a hint of that in the anguished cry of Peter to Jesus later by the sea of Galilee, when Peter said, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee" (John 21:17). Others did not know that Peter loved Christ but Peter knew that Jesus knew. What a comparison to all of us when our sins have shaken the faith of others in us and when the critical and self-righteous pass judgment upon us! God knows our hearts and He knows if we truly love Him, even

though our lives shamefully fail to show it.

A Christian cannot commit the unpardonable sin nor any other sin that would involve the loss of his salvation, but aside from that a child of God may be guilty of any outward gross sin, however vile, that a lost sinner might commit. If it is drunkenness, then Noah, whom God picked out of the whole world as the best man, and saved him and his family in the flood — Noah got drunk (Gen. 9:21). So did Lot (Gen. 19:33). So did some Christians in the church at Corinth. They got drunk at the Lord's Supper and died and were taken on to Heaven because of their sin (I Cor. 11:21, 30). So have thousands of other born-again Christians so that the most spiritual church in the Bible, the Ephesians, needed to be warned: "Be ye not drunk with wine."

Can a Christian commit the sin of fornication or adultery? Many Christians have committed it. David did (II Sam. 11:4). So did Lot (Gen. 19:32-36). So did the man whom Paul had the church at Corinth to exclude from membership and then receive again (I Cor. 5:1).

Can a lost sinner commit murder? So did more than one Christian in the Bible. David did (II Sam. 11:14-17). David was a man of blood and for that reason was not allowed to build the temple (I Chron. 20:3). Moses killed a man (Exodus 2:12). Peter certainly tried to kill the servant of the high priest, when he cut off his ear (John 18:10). And the sin was counted so disgraceful that neither Matthew, Mark, nor Luke was allowed to tell who did it, but only John whose gospel was written long after Peter was dead. We know that a certain kind of cold-blooded murderous hate is not possible to a Christian (I John 3:15), because being saved involves a change of heart and a partaking of the Divine nature. But it is certain that saved people must beware lest they fall into even the grossest sins, such as drunkenness, cursing, adultery or even killing. Surely these examples ought to show us that we are utterly incapable of seeing the human heart and judging it. There is no possible way by which we may know whether another is saved or lost.

"For man looketh on the outward appearance, but the

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Lord looketh on the heart" (I Sam. 16:7).

Lost People May Appear To Be Saved

Appearances are deceitful. Human judgment is unreliable. If one cannot certainly judge by another's life that he is lost, just so one cannot be sure that those who appear to be saved are saved.

Judas Iscariot evidently convinced everyone who knew him, save Jesus alone, that he was a Christian. Not a single time is raised a question about the sincerity of Judas as a Christian. He was made treasurer of the band and carried the bag. When Jesus plainly told the disciples that one of them was a devil who did not believe in him (John 6:64, 70, 71), there is no indication that anyone suspected Judas. Later, when at the last supper, Jesus said, "One of you shall betray me," everyone of them began to say, "Lord, is it I?" (Matt. 26:21, 22). No one said, "Is it Judas?" The tenth chapter of Matthew indicates that Judas was sent on the missionary tour with the others to heal the sick and cast out devils. And Matthew 7:22, 23, states that many like him that are lost sinners will be turned away from the gate of Heaven.

Doubtless, many a self-righteous hypocrite in the churches, unconverted, appears so pious, teaches the Bible so well, so prays in public, sings in the choir, tithes, and lives a moral and upright life as to convince everyone that he is a child of God. It is impossible for a frail human being to really judge, and to attempt to do so is wicked sin. Jesus commands, "Judge not, that ye be not judged."

The Warning of the Tares

In Matthew, chapter thirteen, the Saviour illustrates the Kingdom of Heaven by a field sowed with good seed into which an enemy came and sowed tares. The tares and wheat appeared so much alike that all were deceived for a time. Then the servants wanted to pluck out the tares but the householder said, "Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them" (Matt. 13:29). Any self-righteous, arrogant judge who would take upon himself the duty and privilege of plucking out of the church all of the unsaved ones would root up the wheat with tares. Only the angels of God at the proper time will be wise enough to take the tares and burn them and gather the wheat into the barn. Some tares appear to be wheat and wheat appears to be tares. And if you really knew all the sins of every Christian in the world, then everyone of them would look to you like a lost sinner.

Salvation Is By Grace Alone

We are all such sinners that it only the grace of God that can save any of us. No one ever deserved salvation before he was

saved, and it is equally true that not a one of us deserved salvation after we are saved. The best and purest Christian in the world is still an unprofitable servant. Of us all it is true, "There is no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:22, 23). Every one of us who are children of God deserved to go to Hell. We deserved it before we were saved and we deserve it now. We were sinners before we were saved and we are sinners now. We had a fallen nature with all the inward taint of sin before we were saved, and now, we have a new nature, we are born again, we are "Partakers of the divine nature" (II Pet. 1:4). We are now the children of God, but, alas, we still have the old nature, too. Our bodies are the bodies of fallen men and women and if we are honest, we must say like Paul, "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh), dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not" (Rom. 7:18). And again, "So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin" (Rom. 7:25).

Therefore, it is evident that the lost man has one nature and it is bad, but the saved man has two natures, both the old which is bad and the new which is good. There are no Christians except sinning Christians. Therefore, if we knew all about any Christian in the world, there would be plenty of reason to be shocked and disgusted with his sin and plenty of reason for a presumptuous judge to decide that any Christian was not saved, judged by his life.

It is clear that those who feel so free to judge whether others are saved, need to learn more clearly the precious doctrine of salvation by Christ and the doctrine of all-pervading sin.

The Inexcusable Presumption of Those Who Judge Others When Equally Guilty

The wicked sin in judging others is that the one who judges deliberately excuses or ignores his own sin which is just as bad as that he so vigorously condemns in others. Romans 2:1 says, "Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things."

That scripture is the plain warning that the wrath of God is waiting to fall on such an inexcusable sinner as one who judged others.

One who judges others is the same kind of sinner. That is the reason for the warning in Matthew 7:1: "JUDGE NOT, THAT YE BE NOT JUDGED." The following verse says, "For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." The sin of passing judgment on others, judging the heart, their motives, judging their sincerity, their salvation, and condemning

them is so great that God has determined everyone guilty shall be measured in the same bushel and shall be judged in the same way. In Luke 6:37, God looks at it from the other side and promises, "Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven." Those who are merciful and charitable to others shall have others be merciful and charitable to them. Those who refuse to condemn will not be condemned. Those who are quick to forgive will be forgiven themselves. Oh, blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy!

It is often true that those who judge others are guilty of greater sins as Jesus Himself plainly taught. He said:

"And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?"

"Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?"

"Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye" (Matt. 7:3-5).

How aptly the Saviour shows us the wickedness of our hearts. Many of us with a two-by-four timber in our eyes, figuratively speaking, go round about offering to get the sawdust out of other people's eyes! Jesus plainly calls such judges, "Thou hypocrites." And he shows that the sin of those who judge others is that they consider not the beam that is in their own eyes.

How often it is that our self-righteousness is only a cloak for more wicked sins than those we condemn in others! A woman called me across a certain city once to talk to her husband who had the habit of drink. The husband prayed with me with contrite confessions, with many, many tears, pleaded with God to give him grace. But his wife with eyes snapping and bitter words accused her husband, "I don't believe he even tries! He has promised me he would never drink again. He has promised his children the same. But just as soon as he gets his pay check, if some of his cronies want him to go to the tavern he takes one drink and then he is off on a big drunk again. I don't believe he loves us as he says he does. I don't believe he loves God as he says he does. If he did, he wouldn't get drunk."

I told the dear wife, "Your husband is sick. His will is broken down. He needs your love, your pity, your help, and not your scolding. He has one temptation and you have another. He has a temptation to take a glass of beer with the boys and you have a temptation to lose your temper and nag and scold until he has no peace, until life is a burden, until home is a hell on earth. Then to drown his sorrow he is tempted all

the more to drink. Your sin is at least as great as his."

Not long afterwards it was discovered that he had an incurable brain tumor. On trying to operate, the surgeon found he was beyond help. How many scathing words had struck like arrows in the heart of this poor sick man trying to hold on to his job, trying to walk straight, yet the victim of temptation he could not master, especially in view of his infirmity.

I tell you now, that many a self-righteous Christian, judging others, condemning their sin, is as guilty in God's sight as the drunkard and the harlot, the blasphemer and the thief! Oh, whoever thou art that judgest others, thou art inexcusable! The sin of judging is a presumptuous sin, a sin of the proud and haughty and self-righteous Pharisee. It is a sin that God hates and upon which He has vowed retribution!

We are all made of the same kind of dirt. We are all of one blood. We are all alike sinners. Only the mercy of God could take any of us to Heaven. Those of you who have not fallen into disgraceful sin may yet do so. You who do not commit adultery may lust in your heart which is the same sin in God's sight (Matt. 7:28). You who do not kill may hate. You who do not steal may covet. But if God withdraws the hedges and barriers with which He has protected you more than others, you, too, may become a drunkard, an adulterer, or a thief. "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (I Cor. 10:12). And remember that sweet injunction of Galatians 6:1: "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

Considering thyself lest thou also be tempted! If we considered our own frailties, our own sinfulness, we would not so quickly judge others.

I think preachers have stronger temptations than other people and there are certain kinds of temptations to which preachers are more prone than others. So it seems that preachers who preach against sin and who have high ideals and strong standards of Christian living are themselves more often the victim of the temptations to judge others.

Not long ago, I was grieved by the attack on the president of a great Christian school. Mimeographed pages were handed me with an assortment of charges. Even if I had known none of the facts of the case I could see how unjust and unchristian were the criticisms made. One woman was quoted saying that this man of God who had won so many souls and been so greatly used of God should certainly not be in his present position because previous to his conversion he was an actor on the stage! Nothing was intimated against his character now, no charge of sin even when he was an actor. Another unknown correspondent was quoted, without giving either the name or any reasons, saying that in ten years the school would be given over to modernism. Intelligent and Godly people would surely not take seriously such judging. It showed in the first place the utter ignorance of the deep humility, the holy life, and the spirit-filled ministry of the man who was criticized. On the other hand it revealed the self-righteous and haughty sin of the critics.

Not so long ago, a group of earnest Christian workers were together, not frivolous, not unkind, but Godly soul-winning men. I was surprised to hear sharp criticism of an elderly evangelist who had taken a second wife, much younger than himself, a year or so after the death of his first wife. But someone called attention to the fact that he broke no commandment of God and it was suggested we all withhold judgment, particularly since we did not know all the facts.

Nearly every clique and clan among fundamentally sound Christians criticizes and passes judgment on others who do not affiliate with them, but who are just as true to the Word and just as useful to God. Some preachers think it is a major part of their calling to "expose," to "uncover," to criticize, to lambast and to break down confidence in other earnest Christians. May God pity us preachers and

The God of All Comfort

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Christian has to face all these things as he goes through the world. But, oh, he has the Comforter to whom he may tell all his sorrows and perplexities and One who enters with him into everything. It is written, "In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them" (Isa. 63:9). And you remember that word in the book of the prophet Isaiah which says, "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you" (Isa. 66:13). It is very interesting to notice that the word translated *comforteth* there comes through the Hebrew root *to sigh*, and it might be rendered, "As one whom his mother sighs with, so will I sigh with you."

Do you remember when you were a little boy or a little girl and you got into some trouble or other, and you would run to your mother, and your mother would take you in her arms, and how she would sigh with you! Remember how she would say, "Oh, yes, yes, mother understands! Mother feels for you! Mother knows how badly you feel!" And she would sigh with you, and, oh, how it

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 2)

help us to love one another and to be forbearing, forgiving, to minister to one another in the spirit of Christ, particularly since we are so often guilty of the sin or sins just as bad in God's sight.

To judge others is presumptuous. We draw conclusions out of inaccuracies and ignorance instead of from perfect knowledge.

To judge others involves lack of brotherly love. Love "thinketh no evil" (I Cor. 13:5). Love is blind. If we loved people as we ought, we should be as slow to judge them as a mother is to condemn her child.

To judge others is the sin of a Pharisee, a hypocrite; it ignores and hides and makes an alibi for one's own weakness and sin, while drawing the worst conclusions possible from the frailty of others.

To judge others is a sin of false doctrine, too. It exalts human righteousness and minimizes the power of God. It encourages people to reform instead of being reborn. It would exalt Judas above Peter, and the Christ-rejecting Pharisee above the repenting publican.

Judging others — how different from the spirit of Christ, His mercy, His humility, His love, His quick forgiveness!

Therefore, let us judge not and we shall not be judged; let us condemn not and we shall not be condemned; let us forgive and we shall be forgiven!

His Way

God bade me go when I would stay
(Twas cool within the wood);
I did not know the reason why.
I heard a boulder crashing by
Across the path where I stood.

He bade me stay when I would go;
"Thy will be done," I said.
They found one day at early dawn,
Across the way I would have gone,
A serpent with a mangled head.

No more I ask the reason why,
Although I may not see
The path ahead, His way I go;
For though I know not, He doth know,
And He will choose safe paths
for me.

—The Sunday School Times.

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The God of All Comfort

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comforted you, didn't it? Well, the Word says, "As one whom his mother sighs with, so will I sigh with you." Do you realize that? On the nights that you can't sleep, on the nights that you toss in bed, the things that trouble you will come before you even after you pray about them and try to leave them all at the feet of Jesus. And you just don't know how to face tomorrow. Do you know God is right there by your side, and He is entering into it all with you? He sighs with you. He understands, and He intends to undertake for you. Just trust Him.

"He knows and loves and cares, Nothing this truth can dim. He gives the very best to those Who leave the choice to Him."

It takes faith to do that, but faith is always rewarded.

Then there is another phase of comfort that means so much to the Christian when he fails — and Christians do fail. "For there is not a just man upon the earth that doeth good and sinneth not." Even the best of Christians fail. And, alas, alas! sometimes our failures are of such a character that they leave certain temporal results in their trail even after we have gone to the Lord and confessed them and have been forgiven. David, you know, had that experience. How dreadfully he sinned! How terribly he failed! And for a year he refused to confess his sin. But when Nathan came to him and said, "Thou art the man," he broke down and said, "I have sinned." Then Nathan said, "The Lord hath put away thy sin." And that was true, David was a forgiven man. Do you remember something else God said? He said, "Because of this sin which has made the ears of all Israel to tingle and has brought such dishonor on my name, because of this, David, the sword shall never depart from thy house." And those temporal consequences went on all through David's life, and he could always trace it back to that sin. All this because he failed. I can imagine David saying, "I don't think God can have forgiven me or He would not have allowed these consequences." Oh, yes, he was forgiven the moment he broke down in repentance and confessed his sin, but these temporal consequences were for the good of David's soul and a warning to other people.

Suppose you had a child in your family who was rather unruly and naughty. We will say this is a boy—girls are always good, aren't they? This boy loves to go out and play ball after school. But he has been very naughty and you feel that you will have to discipline him. You say, "If I have any trouble with you tomorrow morning as I had with you today, then you shan't go out of the house for a week after school hours, but stay in and study your lessons shut up in your room." But the same boy is just as naughty as ever the next morning, and you say to him, "Now when you come home, go up to your room and stay there. Take your books and study." Well, the boy comes home and goes up to his room — he has to do it. There he is shut in. He is very rebellious at first, but by and by as the hours go on, he begins to break a bit, especially when he smells the supper and he is shut away upstairs there. And finally he sends for you and breaks down and says, "Mother, I have been very naughty and done very wrong. I am ashamed of myself. Won't you forgive me?"

"Yes, dear boy, now that you have confessed and acknowledged the wrong you have done, I am glad to forgive you," and you put a kiss of forgiveness on his face.

"That's fine! Now I am going down to supper, and going to play baseball!"

"Oh, no."

"Don't I go down with the family?"

"No, you stay up here until bedtime."

"But haven't you forgiven me?"

"Yes, I have forgiven you."

"Then if you have forgiven me, you are not going to keep me up here, are you?"

"Look at all your brothers and sisters. Your punishment has to be a warning to them. You have

disobeyed so badly and set them such a bad example they must see that it doesn't pay to do wrong. You just stay up here. You are forgiven, and I will send you up a good supper, but you cannot come down."

And day after day up there, my, he can't understand it! But he spends the time in study. Next week they are having examinations and that boy comes out one hundred per cent on everything! He says, "That is because I could not get out and play ball. I was shut up studying my lessons and I made the best record I ever did." His discipline has done him a lot of good. He profited from it.

My friends, so it is with us. God has to allow temporal consequences to follow our failures even after He has forgiven us. But all these things work out for our good eventually. They are all for our blessing and we can be comforted with the thought, "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth."

And now in these last few minutes, let me address myself particularly to any who may be here who are out of Christ. As I look over this audience I wish I could see into your hearts — you don't want me to, I know — but I wish I could see at least this far, to know how many here are really saved, that I could know to whom I ought to speak. But though I can't do that, there is One here who does see your heart, and He knows your every thought, and that is the God of all comfort. And the God of all comfort is waiting to comfort you. He is not only the God of all comfort, but He is called the God of all grace, and there is grace and forgiveness for you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ who died for you. In His grace He sends the gospel today. In His grace He has brought you to hear the message. He wants you to come to Him, He is calling you to Himself. He wants you to enjoy the comfort that the gospel brings. Dear Christless soul, let me plead with you. If you have tried the world and found it impossible to satisfy your heart, and I know you can't find satisfaction there, if you have tried other things and you are still in distress, oh, let me plead with you to come now to Jesus. Heed His gracious invitation, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." Come to Him just as you are.

That old hymn — you would think it would be worn out, wouldn't you? but it never wears out. I heard D. L. Moody say, "I believe more souls have come to Christ while that hymn, 'Just As I Am,' was being sung than any other hymn that has ever been written." You can't wear it out, it is so fitting. It suits unsaved people. It is just the words to put in the heart of a poor, anxious soul. Won't you come and say,

"Just as I am without one plea, But that Thy blood was shed for me, And that Thou bidst me come to Thee, O Lamb of God, I come! I come!"

And He is waiting for you to come. He is waiting to save, He is waiting to pardon, waiting to justify, waiting to be your Friend, your Shepherd, your Guide as you go the rest of the way through this poor world. Won't you come to Him?

We are going to sing that hymn in a moment. Just before we sing, I would like to know if there are those here who are anxious to come, and you would be glad to have this group of Christians lift their hearts in a word of prayer in your behalf that the light may break and you may be given grace to make a decision for Christ. Your uplifted hand will say to us, "I am really concerned about my soul, and I want your concern, your interest." Will you raise your hand for that? Is there an anxious soul here who could do that today? As I look over this audience, if there is any here who is not a Christian, if there is any here who has never come to Christ, do you want to come, would you like to know His saving grace? Will you lift your hand if you would? We are going to sing this hymn, "Just as I am without one plea," and as we sing, we invite any who are here who might be concerned to step out here to the front where someone may deal with you personally.

With the Editor

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

together. Joy, two and one-half years old, is petted by all and calls Mr. Ennis "Grandpa" because he is about the same size and age of her Granddaddy Cooke, and he seems pleased with the title.

Today we meet at 10 a.m. at the tabernacle for a day of fasting and prayer — fasting at noon, praying all day, or until we have clear impression of victory and blessing. People will come and go as they will or as they must. Many will fast and pray at home. How little to do to find the blessing of God! It is old-fashioned, out of date, I know. I know God is not concerned about the form. I know that unsaved Pharisees fasted. But so also did Mordecai and Esther; so did the Ninevites to whom Jonah preached, so did saintly Anna, night and day in the temple serving God and pleasing Him (Luke 2:37). So did the disciples of John the Baptist and so did the apostles after Jesus was taken away and they waited before Pentecost, in prayer and supplications (Matt. 9:14, 15). Jesus fasted forty days (Matt. 4:2), Daniel fasted and prayed for forgiveness on Israel (Dan. 9:3). David fasted often. Paul, Barnabas and others fasted before the great missionary journeys (Acts 13:2, 3). Dozens of times Bible Christians fasted and prayed and God heard and abundantly blessed.

So today we shall confess our sins, praise God for His blessings, wait for His leading and blessing, and insistently bring definite objects in prayer before Him, for individuals saved, for a great revival, for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. In a day of heart searching prayer, any Christian can find much to confess and forsake as sin. God will meet those who seek Him with all their hearts. He is ready now; then may we get ready too, at any cost, humbling ourselves, forgetting fleshly needs for a time, that we may be conscious of our far greater spiritual needs. I expect much blessing today, from God.

The revival campaign grows in power. Crowds were much greater last night, hundreds from far and near, people that would have never come within a church building for revival services. I gave no invitation, yet a man was wonderfully saved after the service. One night I gave an invitation with five responding, four professing faith in Christ, one coming for rededication as a backslider. Two were men. Yet, with some saved all along, we have not yet reached the crest, the peak of blessing. Interest, crowds, conviction, increase visibly. In these two weeks left I expect a wonderful blessing. May God grant it.

A drunkard came to claim Christ the other night, after deep concern and much instruction. Another drunkard came to pastor Wirth's home and was saved; came seeking God. Crowds regularly have people from a dozen towns, twenty, thirty, sixty miles away. About 35 came from Bloomington, 65 miles away, Friday night. Peoria, Decatur, Springfield, Chandlerville, Tallulla and other towns are represented almost every night. The man saved last night was from Peoria. We covet your prayers. God answers prayer, and loves to give a great revival.

"The Sword of the Lord is the greatest paper in America," writes a friend who sends five subscriptions for friends. Another lady sent \$20 for subscriptions for Christians in her town who need development. Another friend feels led to use tithe money regularly to get out the gospel through *The Sword of the Lord*, and has begun to send one subscription a week. The editor does not feel like disputing with the brother who says this paper is the best in America. I like it best myself, I read every line in it! But I modestly suppose that some other enthusiastic editors may think their papers are the best. I make allowances for Dr. Trumbull of the *Sunday School Times* and Dr. Houghton of *Moody Monthly*, if they cannot agree that *The Sword of the Lord* is better than *Sunday School Times* and *Moody Monthly*. But one other man and I still hold to our opinion!

Seriously, God is greatly blessing the paper to many hearts. I beg my readers to help us get out the gospel through this paper, with

The Church of Today

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

songs of the cross, and entertainment programs and festivals crowd out the prayer and praise services. "Dad" Hall, the old-fashioned Episcopalian preacher, uttered a great truth when he said, "The first church waited upon God in the upper room while the twentieth century church waits upon the tables in the supper room."

That old warrior and mighty soldier of the cross, General Wm. Booth, said there were five great dangers that will confront the twentieth century church, and he mentioned them in this order:

1. Religion without the Holy Spirit.
2. Christianity without Christ.
3. Forgiveness without regeneration.
4. Morality without God.
5. Heaven without hell.

It is indeed pitiful to watch the "works" and "efforts" of an apostate church and how a backslidden group which has lost power with God will make a sorrowful attempt to put their machinery in motion. Organization? Yes, indeed, but a mechanism with squeaky wheels — a man-made system that functions for selfish interest to glorify man and not to the honor of God. In other words: it becomes a "movement" that doesn't "move" anything.

Let me give you some examples. God gave us a glorious revival in a certain town. People crowded the church night after night. A real awakening came to the church and it received a new inspiration to go on for God. A nearby church decided that they also would try something along the same line in order to get new interest and more members, so they called on one of their denominational leaders to come for a series of meetings. Here is the printed, preliminary announcement of the coming meetings: "A series of preparatory meetings to the evangelistic campaign to be conducted at the First . . . Church early in January by Dr. . . . will begin Wednesday evening. A penny supper sponsored by the Women's Society will be served at 6:30 followed by a devotional service directed by the Men's Brotherhood class. Guild Girls will hold a candy sale later . . ." (It was amusing to note the "devotions" by the Brotherhood class, who opposed our meeting by assisting the pastor in putting on a "drama" on Sunday nights.)

In closing this chapter, let me give you a true-to-life picture of a backslidden church.

I happened to be in a certain town where I was a stranger and my errand kept me there over Sunday night. I decided to visit some church and worship with God's people. I thought it would be interesting to come to some church where no one knew me and I could sit unnoticed in the audience. I passed by many churches but chose a large, beautiful church building that represented the old-time Gospel. I slipped in quietly in one of the rear pews where I was well hidden behind a rather plump lady in a heavy fur coat, and there was another large mink coat at my right. It was a beautiful, large auditorium seating about a thousand people, with about 150 in attendance. The program handed me stated that it was a forty-five minute service with a twelve minute sermon. The robed choir sang a number of anthems very well and in a worshipful manner; the organist knew how to bring forth sweet melodies from the large pipe-organ. After lengthy and dry announcements, the ushers walked forward in true military fashion, bedecked in cut-away coats with striped trousers, to receive the evening offering, after which the congregation arose and sang "Gloria Patri." It was beautiful and impressive. The pastor arose and read his text which was from Romans twelve. Here, I thought, we shall have an old-fashioned "altar-rail sermon." But what a disappointment!

"Years ago," he said, "we did not understand this text; but we have built gymnasiums in connection with our churches so our

its distinct message of evangelism and Bible teaching of the fervent and practical kind that God uses to transform lives. Send subscriptions and pray.

young people can present their bodies a living sacrifice . . ." While he was speaking the woman in the heavy fur coat in front of me fell asleep, and the lady at my side was busy reading the song book. While the choir sang the Doxology the pastor left the platform and walked to the steps leading to the exit, and for a moment I thought maybe he would go and talk to people about God, but as we were leaving I noticed him standing at the steps shaking hands with the people as they passed by. I studied this act closely and noticed that they usually thanked the pastor for his sermon. I became rather curious as to what those two women would say when it came their turn to pass by the pastor and take his hand, so I followed in line. Here came the sister who was busy reading the song book while he preached. Surely she could not thank him for a sermon she had not listened to, but behold, she took his hand and so sweetly said, "Thank you, pastor, for that beautiful sermon." Well, she got by all right, but how about that plump lady in the heavy fur coat who slept during his sermonette? I felt rather sorry for her, but with her white-gloved hand she took his and smiled so sweetly as she looked him in the eye and exclaimed, "I enjoyed your sermon immensely, pastor."

Early next morning I was standing on the station platform awaiting the train that would bring me back to Chicago when I noticed this pastor pacing up and down the platform, also bound for Chicago. I followed him into the coach and, unnoticed, took my place alongside of him as I courteously asked if I might share the seat with him. After removing my coat and hat I told him of my habit of asking those I ride with if they were saved.

"I'm a preacher, my friend," was his reply.

"I did not ask what your profession was, I asked if you were saved, a born-again Christian," I added.

"Can a man be a preacher and not be a Christian?" was his next question.

"Yes," I replied, "because two preachers have been saved in my meetings."

"Who are you, if I may ask?" he curiously inquired.

I handed him my card. "You don't mean to tell me you are head of the great noon-day meetings in Chicago?"

And when I explained my connection with that God-blessed ministry he said how much this broadcast had meant to him and how happy he was to meet the man whom he had heard so many times over the air.

"And were you in town last night?"

I told him that an errand had brought me there.

"Oh, how I wish I had known it, because it would have been such a happy pleasure to have you in our church. You see, I have the biggest congregation in town, more than two thousand members and a church seating more than two thousand and last night I had nearly a packed church and an old-time meeting and I know you would have enjoyed it . . . Oh, how I wish you had been there."

I looked him squarely in the face and said, "I WAS."

He was stunned for a minute and then changed the subject.

A church that has left God's blue-print is a sorry spectacle and a laughing stock to the world. It not only has lost contact with heaven but has lost the respect of the community. It reminds me what an old judge said to a crowded court room when I stood before him charged with exceeding the speed limit of twenty-five miles an hour. When I tried to plead my case by saying I was sure I wasn't speeding, he said, "I suppose you were in a hurry to go to some road-house for a great night of carousing."

"No, your honor," I answered very meekly, "I had my family in the car and we were going to a prayer meeting."

This stunned him and he sat up in his chair, put his glasses on his forehead as he looked over a crowded courtroom of similar victims and exclaimed, "This man is discharged. I never heard of anyone being in a hurry to go to a prayer meeting."

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